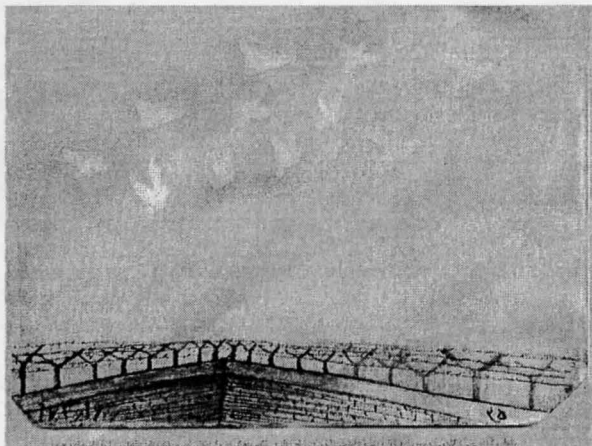


Women Political Prisoners: Memoirs and Resistance



[The anguish of prison and the hope of freedom.
Since I did not have white paint, I have painted the birds with
toothpaste, which after drying crumbled and left a trace.]
Painting by Soudabeh Ardavan. And excerpted from her book
Yadnegarehayeh Zendan [Imaging Memoirs of Prison, 2003].

Sunday, September 26
7:00pm – 11:00pm
Innis College Town Hall
2 Sussex Avenue
University of Toronto



IWS&S

INSTITUTE for WOMEN'S STUDIES
and GENDER STUDIES
University of Toronto

BRIDES OF FREEDOM

Nemat Mirzazadeh (M. Azarm).

Your blue voice
In the midst of the dark bustle of the roaring river of people
- during the hurried days of protest -
even now,
clear and translucent,
floats in the air.

Your blue voice
with which you chanted the hope of dawn, in flocks of thousands upon thousands,
is still entangled with the branches and tree leaves in the avenue of "Enghelab"¹.

Kudos to your unselfishness oh lady of patience!
Oh beautiful blossoming daughter of the people, oh daughter of Iran!
you who battled on all frontiers:
- the school front, factory and university
and the confinement of "Evin" and "Ghassr" prisons-
and for years how beautiful is your way of presence in our nation's struggles

and the tombs of our land's soil, in uncountable numbers received,
the brides of freedom:
with their gowns reddened.
and their long hair soaked with blood.

Your blue voice, is the sky of Iran
so welcoming and gentle.
and the song still timbering in it
is the songs of liberation,
the chant of freedom.

Fall 1979- Tehran.

¹ Enghelab is the name of a street in Tehran. The meaning of the word is Revolution.

Women Political Prisoners: Memoirs and Resistance

- 7:10 **Homa Alizadeh**
Classical and Protest Songs from Iran
- 7:25 **Shahrzad Mojab**
Dedication and Introduction
- 7:40 **Haifa Zangana**
How and Why: Reassessment of Memory, Shaping the Future
- 8:30 **Aram Bayat**
Brides of Freedom - inspired by the poem of Nemat Mirzazadeh, Iranian poet



- 8:40 **Intermission**
- 9:00 **George Sawa & Suzanne Meyers-Sawa**
Sufi and Classical Arabic Music

Women Political Prisoners: Memoirs and Resistance

- 9:20 **Spirit Synott and Rachel Gorman**
The Ghost
Alone and unable to sleep, a woman is haunted by her sister's death. This duet was inspired by stories of a Kurdish family whose sister was killed in one of the prisons of Iran's Islamic Republic. Choreographed by Rachel Gorman; Music by Lilia Silveira; Costumes by Michelle Turpin.
- 9:30 **Shahrzad Arshadi and Amin Zarghami**
Red Names
A short video celebrating the legacy of thousands of women activists who lost their lives in Iran between 1979 and 1999.
- 9:55 **Hassan Pooya**
What is Khavaran?
Kanoon-e Khavaran, Toronto-based advocacy group in support of 'Free All Political Prisoners,' 'No Torture,' and 'No Execution'
- 10:20 **Aram Bayat**
Blue Cashmere (Termeh Aabi) Iranian Traditional Dance with Azerbaijani and central Asian women dance flavor



Presenters

Haifa Zangana graduated from the University of Baghdad School of Pharmacy in 1974. As a member of the communist party in Iraq she was arrested and tortured under Saddam's regime. After her release from prison, she left Iraq and joined the Palestine Liberation Organization in Damascus. In 1976, she finally decided to leave the region and sought refuge in London, UK where she is currently residing. Haifa is an anti-war, peace activist as well as a novelist and a painter who has participated in many Surrealist group exhibitions in Europe and the US.



Homa Alizadeh is a political refugee residing in Canada since 1984. She has been a political and human rights activist and participated in many political and social events relating to the people's oppression all over the world. Homa Alizadeh does not consider herself as a singer even though singing is her passion, she rather participates in any activity that relates to the people's struggle for freedom and social justice.

Shahrzad Arshadi: A human rights activist and Montréal - based Canadian/Iranian artist, came to Canada as a political refugee on December 24, 1983. In the past ten years, Shahrzad has ventured into different fields of photography, painting and video, enabling her focus on issues of memory, culture and human rights. Shahrzad has exhibited her work in various locations across North America and Europe.



Aram Bayat graduated from the Institution of Iranian National and Folkloric Dance in Iran, and professional Photography in Dawson College, Montreal, Canada. She also studied in the Digital Imaging and Sound program at Concordia University. Aram worked as a Folk Dancer, Choreographer and Dance Instructor under the Iranian Ministry of Art & Culture. She works as a Choreographer & Dance Instructor in Canada and she founded ms. Sun (khorshid khanom) Dance group in 1988 in Montreal.

Choreographer **Rachel Gorman** bases her dance-theatre in the physical communication between real people. Globe and Mail's Paula Citron called Gorman's *Waking the Living*, presented in the Composer's Choice series of the fringe Festival of Independent Dance Artists 2002, "compelling...a disturbing and riveting reality check" (12/08/02, p. R3). Rachel has presented work at Dusk Dances 2004, fFIDA 1999, 2000 & 2002, Mayworks 2000 & 2001, and SummerWorks 2000.



Suzanne Meyers-Sawa is acting head librarian at the Faculty of Music, U of T. She did graduate work at U of T in musicology and library science. She studied percussion in Egypt, and is co-authoring with George Sawa a book of translation of and commentary on anecdotes from the Grand Book of Songs of al-Isbahani.

Presenters



Dr. Shahrzad Mojab is an academic activist, she is the Director of the Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Studies at the University of Toronto and Associate Professor at the Department of Adult Education Counselling Psychology, OISE/UT. She is the editor of *Women of A Non States Nation: The Kurds* and the co-editor of *Of Property and Propriety: The Role of Gender and Class in Imperialism and Nationalism*. Shahrzad has extensive research and publications on university-state relations; student movements; war, diaspora, and learning; women political prisoners; and war and education. She is currently working on two book-length manuscripts on 'honour killing' and globalization and lifelong learning.

Hassan Pooya is a clinical technologist at St. Michael's Hospital. He is one of the founder of Kanoon-e Khavaran and member of boards of directors. He has done research on mass execution of political prisoners in Iran and has published several articles on this matter.



George Sawa studied Western and Arabic music in Alexandria, Egypt. He immigrated to Canada in 1970 and did graduate work at U of T specializing in medieval Arabic music history. He is a performer on the qanun (Arabic psaltery), an independent scholar, and the author of 2 books: *Music Performance Practice in the Early Abbasid Era, 750-932 AD* and *Theories and Practices of Rhythms in Medieval Arabic Writings*, forthcoming. He is presently working on a music and socio-cultural dictionary of the Grand Book of Songs of al-Isbahani (d. 967).

Composer **Lilia Silveira's** eclectic, melodic, and compelling soundtrack recordings lend themselves perfectly to dance and dance-theatre. Lilia has composed scores for the OMO Dance Company's *Diary of an Exile*; Rachel Gorman's *Waking the Living*, in the Composer's Choice series of fFIDA 2002; *E.merge(ncy)* in SummerWorks 2000; *The Things We Say* and *The 90 Minute Improv* at Dancemakers Studio in 1999. Lilia has performed live music scores for *Things We Didn't Learn in School* at Mayworks 2000, *The 90 Minute Improv* (2000) at Dancemakers Theatre, and *Shelter* at fFIDA 2000 and Mayworks 2001. Lilia has produced three CD's: *Perhaps* in 1998, *Radio Friendly* in May 2002 and *The Clicks* in 2004.



Dancer and "roll" model **Spirit Synott** has been performing across Canada since 1999. She has been a guest performer with acclaimed Toronto-based companies Canboulay Dance Theatre and OMO Dance Company, and has performed with independent artists Anthony Guerra, Viv Moore and Almond Small. Spirit is also in high demand as a solo artist and personality at charity events and disability arts festivals, and has performed at an impressive range of venues.

Amin Zarghami is a Producer for BBC World Radio.

Sponsors



Kanoon-e Khavaran is an organization that strives to achieve the unconditional freedom of all political prisoners in Iran and the abolition of torture and capital punishment.

Sumoud (steadfastness in Arabic), is a political prisoner solidarity group established by a group of activists in Toronto, Canada. We campaign primarily around Palestinian political prisoners being held by Israel, of which there are approximately 8000 currently behind bars. We also take up the imprisonment of indigenous, immigrant and racialized people in North America, as well as the role of the prison industrial complex in criminalizing poverty and political resistance. To find out more about Sumoud, establish a Sumoud group in your community and support our work, contact us at sumoud@tao.ca



SJ@Uoft:

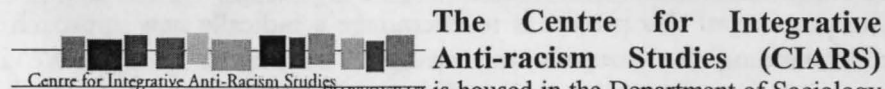
The University of Toronto's Social Justice Cluster

The Social Justice Cluster is a multidisciplinary collaboration that promotes research and pedagogy on social justice issues and provides opportunities to showcase models of activist scholarship. www.socialjustice.utoronto.ca

Journal of Prisoners on Prisons attempts to make the accounts, experiences and analyses of the criminalized heard and discussed by providing an educational forum in which women and men can participate directly in the development of research which concerns them directly. Readers of the Journal of Prisoners on Prisons are prisoners and former prisoners, their relatives and friends, faculty and students in colleges and universities, political activists, prison and community program workers. These people and others are being encouraged to question their assumptions about crime and punishment by reading the Journal's in-depth articles.



Sponsors



CIARS/OISE-UT is housed in the Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. CIARS is devoted to Anti-Racism Studies in Education. Our mandate is to enhance research and teaching in the areas of equity, anti-racism praxis and alternative knowledge(s) in education. Our research looks at education from an integrative perspective, that is, education as a process embedded within wider social processes. <http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/ciars/>

Al-Awda-Canada, The Palestine Right to Return Group, is a Toronto based group of Canadian and Palestinian individuals active in the Palestine right to return campaign regardless of organizational affiliation if any. Al-Awda-Canada develops, coordinates, supports and guides, grassroots initiatives in Canada for actions related to the Palestine refugee right to return campaigns in Canada. Al Awda Canada is a partner group of BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights in Bethlehem. <http://al-awda.ca>



Jewish Women's Committee to End the Occupation

The JWCEO is a Toronto-based feminist organisation of Jewish Canadian women, founded in 1989. It has a growing membership and is affiliated with Jewish and Palestinian anti-occupation groups across Canada, Israel, Palestine and around the world. We work toward ending the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and believe that ending the Occupation is the essential and vital first step necessary to create conditions for an initiation of a peace process. <http://www.hostultra.com/~jwceo/jwceo4/>



With an emphasis on interdisciplinary discourse, the Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Studies serves as an institutional base for research, teaching, intellectual exchange and collaboration in feminist and gender studies. IWSGS brings together the many distinguished scholars and students doing work in this significant field, located in a variety of faculties and departments across the University of Toronto. www.utoronto.ca/iwsgs/

Innis Town Hall is the University of Toronto most dynamic multi-use venue. Hosting most of the cinema studies program classroom screenings, many local film and video festivals, as well as a number of diverse community and cultural events. www.utoronto.ca/townhall



innis townhall

Women Political Prisoners in the Middle East: An Art-based Project

The purpose of this project is to encourage a radically new approach to understanding the histories and struggles of activist groups. We are proposing a participatory arts-based project for women political prisoners from the Middle East who are living in Canada, and who are interested in working on a photography exhibit or a dance-theatre performance about their experiences as political activists, and as former political prisoners.

We would like to invite women who are interested to join us at these four preliminary sessions:

September 27, 2004:

Writing Political Auto-biography with Haifa Zangana

We will continue to meet for another three sessions after Haifa's workshop to discuss autobiographical writing, and the process of using arts to express historical and political events. The content of these three sessions will be based on the interests expressed by participants who attend Haifa's workshop, or who contact us.

October 4, 2004

October 18, 2004

November 1, 2004

All of these workshops/discussion groups are free and will be held in
OISE/UT, 252 Bloor Street West,
St. George Subway Station, 7th Floor, Room 162 ,
6:00-8:00 pm

For more information please contact Shahrzad Mojab or Rachel Gorman:

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